

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

The following listing, if entered, replaces all prior versions of the claims in the present application.

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

receiving information at a first media access control (MAC) device from a client of the first MAC device, wherein
the information indicates a need to change an amount of data being transmitted through the first MAC device to the client of the first MAC device, and
the client generates the information in response to the client determining that the client is receiving data at a rate exceeding a set threshold;
forming a message including an indication to a second MAC device to change a rate at which the second MAC device transmits data to the client, wherein the first MAC device forms the message,
said forming the message uses the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being transmitted to the client,
said forming the message is performed in response to receiving said information,
the message identifies the second MAC device as originating the message, and
a total bandwidth allocation of the first MAC device is unaffected by said change; and
transmitting the message to the second MAC device over a network.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the network is a metropolitan area network (MAN).

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the network is a resilient packet ring (RPR) network.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the network includes a first datapath for transmitting data from the first MAC device to the second MAC device, and wherein the network includes a second datapath for transmitting data from the second MAC device to the first MAC device.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the message is a resilient packet ring (RPR) fairness message.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
determining an extent to which a data buffer associated with the client of the first MAC device contains data; and
preparing the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being transmitted through the first MAC device to the client of the first MAC device based on the extent to which the data buffer associated with the client of the first MAC device contains data.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6 further comprising:
transmitting, to the first MAC device, the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being transmitted through the first MAC device to the client of the first MAC device.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the message further includes a MAC device address.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the MAC device address corresponds to one of the first MAC device, the second MAC device, and another MAC device.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the indication to the second MAC device to change the rate at which the second MAC device transmits data includes at least one of: a MAC device address, a data transmission rate, a ramp factor, and a flag.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the indication to the second MAC device to change the rate at which the second MAC device transmits data includes a data transmission rate, the method further comprising:

determining the data transmission rate.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the determining the data transmission rate further comprises at least one of:

calculating the data transmission rate;
selecting a value for the data transmission rate; and
determining a ramp factor.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

transmitting the message from the second MAC device to a third MAC device.

14. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the first MAC device is part of a first resilient packet ring (RPR) station and wherein the second MAC device is part of a second RPR station.

15. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being transmitted through the first MAC device to the client of the first MAC device includes at least one of: a data transmission rate, a counter value, a message indicating that a buffer threshold has been exceeded, and a signal from the client of the first MAC.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein:

the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being

transmitted through the first MAC device to the client of the first MAC

device further comprises at least one of: information indicating the need to reduce the amount of data being transmitted, and information indicating the need to increase the amount of data being transmitted; and

the indication to the second MAC device to change the rate at which the second

MAC device transmits data further comprises at least one of: an indication

to the second MAC device to reduce the rate at which the second MAC device transmits data, and an indication to the second MAC device to increase the rate at which the second MAC device transmits data.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 encoded in a computer readable medium as instructions executable on a processor, the computer readable medium being one of an electronic storage medium, a magnetic storage medium, and an optical storage medium.

18. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus comprising:
a first media access control (MAC) device operable to be coupled to a network,
wherein
the first MAC device is operable to receive information from a MAC client coupled to the first MAC device,
the first MAC device includes control logic configured to prepare a message for transmission on the network, wherein
the message includes an indication to change a rate at which another MAC device transmits data to the MAC client coupled to the first MAC device,
the message identifies the another MAC device as originating the message, and
a total bandwidth allocation of the first MAC device is unaffected by said change; and
the MAC client coupled to the first MAC device, wherein the MAC client comprises
a buffer for storing data transmitted to the MAC client and
buffer control circuitry configured to provide information about an amount of data stored in the buffer, wherein
the buffer control circuitry is configured to provide the information about an amount of data stored in the buffer in response to

determining that the MAC client is receiving information at a rate exceeding a set threshold, and
the control logic is responsive to the information about the amount of data stored in the buffer to prepare the message.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the network is a metropolitan area network (MAN).

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the network is a resilient packet ring (RPR) network.

21. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 further comprising:
a second MAC device, wherein the second MAC device is the another MAC device;
a first datapath coupled between the first MAC device and the second MAC device, the first datapath for transmitting data from the first MAC device to the second MAC device; and
a second datapath coupled between the first MAC device and the second MAC device, the second datapath for transmitting data from the second MAC device to the first MAC device.

22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the first MAC device is further operable to transmit the message to the second MAC device.

23. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the second MAC device is configured to transmit the message to a third MAC device.

24. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the first MAC device is part of a first resilient packet ring (RPR) station and wherein the second MAC device is part of a second RPR station.

25. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the message is a resilient packet ring (RPR) fairness message.

26. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the buffer control circuitry is coupled to the control logic, and wherein the control logic is further configured to use the information about the amount of data stored in the buffer to determine the indication to change the rate at which another MAC device transmits data.

27. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the message further includes a MAC device address.

28. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the MAC device address corresponds to one of the first MAC device and the another MAC device.

29. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the indication to change the rate at which another MAC device transmits data includes at least one of: a MAC device address, a data transmission rate, a ramp factor, and a flag.

30. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the control circuitry is further configured to determine at least one of a data transmission rate and a data transmission rate ramp.

31. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the information about an amount of data stored in the buffer includes at least one of: a data transmission rate, a counter value, a message indicating that a buffer threshold has been exceeded, and a signal from the client of the first MAC.

32. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein MAC client further comprises packet processing circuitry coupled to the buffer.

33. (Original) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein the packet processing circuitry includes the buffer control circuitry.

34. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the indication to change the rate at which another MAC device transmits data further comprises at least one of an indication to reduce the rate at which another MAC device transmits data, and an indication to increase the rate at which another MAC device transmits data.

35-45. (Cancelled)

46. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:
a first media access control (MAC) device coupled to a network;
a client of the first MAC device coupled to the first MAC device;
a means for receiving information at the first MAC device from the client of the first MAC device indicating a need to change an amount of data being transmitted through the first media access control (MAC) device to the client of the first MAC device, wherein
the client generates the information in response to the client determining that the client is receiving data at a rate exceeding a set threshold;
a means for forming a message including an indication to a second MAC device to change a rate at which the second MAC device transmits data to the client, wherein
said first MAC device comprises said means for forming the message,
said means for forming the message uses the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being transmitted to the client,
said forming the message is performed in response to receiving said information,
the message identifies the second MAC device as originating the message, and
a total bandwidth allocation of the first MAC device is unaffected by said change; and
a means for transmitting the message to the second MAC device over the network.

47. (Original) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the network is at least one of a

metropolitan area network (MAN) and a resilient packet ring (RPR) network.

48. (Original) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the message is a resilient packet ring (RPR) fairness message.

49. (Original) The apparatus of claim 46 further comprising:
a means for determining an extent to which a data buffer associated with the client of the first MAC device contains data; and
a means for preparing the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being transmitted through the first MAC device to the client of the first MAC device based on the extent to which the data buffer associated with the client of the first MAC device contains data.

50. (Original) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the message further includes a MAC device address.

51. (Original) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the indication to the second MAC device to change the rate at which the second MAC device transmits data includes at least one of: a MAC device address, a data transmission rate, a ramp factor, and a flag.

52. (Original) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being transmitted through the first MAC device to the client of the first MAC device includes at least one of: a data transmission rate, a counter value, a message indicating that a buffer threshold has been exceeded, and a signal from the client of the first MAC.

53. (Original) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein:
the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being transmitted through the first MAC device to the client of the first MAC device further comprises at least one of: information indicating the need to reduce the amount of data being transmitted, and information indicating the need to increase the amount of data being transmitted; and

the indication to the second MAC device to change the rate at which the second MAC device transmits data further comprises at least one of: an indication to the second MAC device to reduce the rate at which the second MAC device transmits data, and an indication to the second MAC device to increase the rate at which the second MAC device transmits data.

54. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium comprising program instructions executable on a processor, the computer readable medium being at least one of an electronic storage medium, a magnetic storage medium, and an optical storage medium, wherein the program instructions are operable to implement each of:

receiving information at a first media access control (MAC) device from a client of the first MAC device, wherein
the information indicates a need to change an amount of data being transmitted through the first MAC device to the client of the first MAC device, and
the client generates the information in response to the client determining that the client is receiving data at a rate exceeding a set threshold;
forming a message including an indication to a second MAC device to change a rate at which the second MAC device transmits data to the client, wherein the first MAC device forms the message,
said forming the message uses the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being transmitted to the client,
said forming the message is performed in response to receiving said information,
the message identifies the second MAC device as originating the message, and
transmitting the message to the second MAC device over a network.

55. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 54 wherein the network is at least one of a metropolitan area network (MAN) and a resilient packet ring (RPR) network.

56. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 54 wherein the message is a resilient packet ring (RPR) fairness message.

57. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 54 further comprising program instructions operable to implement:

determining an extent to which a data buffer associated with the client of the first MAC device contains data; and

preparing the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being transmitted through the first MAC device to the client of the first MAC device based on the extent to which the data buffer associated with the client of the first MAC device contains data.

58. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 57 further comprising program instructions operable to implement:

transmitting, to the first MAC device, the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being transmitted through the first MAC device to the client of the first MAC device.

59. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 54 wherein the message further includes a MAC device address.

60. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 59 wherein the MAC device address corresponds to one of the first MAC device, the second MAC device, and another MAC device.

61. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 54 wherein the indication to the second MAC device to change the rate at which the second MAC device transmits data includes at least one of: a MAC device address, a data transmission rate, a ramp factor, and a flag.

62. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 54 wherein the indication to the second MAC device to change the rate at which the second MAC device transmits data includes a data transmission rate, the method further comprising:

determining the data transmission rate.

63. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 54 further comprising program instructions operable to implement at least one of:

calculating the data transmission rate;

selecting a value for the data transmission rate; and

determining a ramp factor.

64. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 54 further comprising program instructions operable to implement:

transmitting the message from the second MAC device to a third MAC device.

65. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 54 wherein the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being transmitted through the first MAC device to the client of the first MAC device includes at least one of: a data transmission rate, a counter value, a message indicating that a buffer threshold has been exceeded, and a signal from the client of the first MAC.

66. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 54 wherein:

the information indicating the need to change the amount of data being

transmitted through the first MAC device to the client of the first MAC

device further comprises at least one of: information indicating the need to

reduce the amount of data being transmitted, and information indicating

the need to increase the amount of data being transmitted; and

the indication to the second MAC device to change the rate at which the second

MAC device transmits data further comprises at least one of: an indication

to the second MAC device to reduce the rate at which the second MAC

device transmits data, and an indication to the second MAC device to

increase the rate at which the second MAC device transmits data.

67. (Cancelled)